

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

**[0018]** The atomic ratio of the amount of the first (Group 2 or Group 3) element to the amount of the second (Group 5) element is at least 1:3, more preferably at least 1:1 (i.e., 3:3). In the preferred case of the atomic ratio of at least 1:1, there are as many atoms of, ~~or more atoms than,~~ the first element ~~than as~~ the second element, or more atoms of the first element than the second element. If there is an atomic excess of the Group 5 second element, sintering is promoted, the opposite of the desirable retardation that is achieved in the present approach.

**[0035]** The atomic ratio of the amount of the first element to the amount of the second element is at least 1:3 (for example, LaTa<sub>3</sub>O<sub>9</sub>), more preferably at least 1:1 (for example, La<sub>3</sub>TaO<sub>7</sub>, where the ratio is 3:1). In the preferred case of an atomic ratio of at least 1:1, there must be as many atoms of, ~~or more atoms than,~~ the first element ~~than as~~ the second element, or more atoms of the first element than the second element. If there is an atomic excess of the Group 5 second element, sintering is promoted, the opposite of the desirable sintering retardation that is achieved in the present approach, although that effect may be tolerated to some degree.